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OLC 76-1240

29 April 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : George L. Cary, Legislative Counsel

SUBJECT : Request from Charles Snodgrass for DDO  
Field Evaluation Reports

1. For some months now Charles Snodgrass has been trying to get out of the DDO and the Comptroller copies of the DDO's Field Evaluation Reports. Snodgrass feels he needs these in order to make some decisions about recommendations to the Subcommittee on budget cuts which would require a reduction in our overseas personnel strength (all of this appears to be an off-shot of the unfortunate situation which developed when a number of the members of the Subcommittee with Snodgrass in the lead descended on [redacted] [redacted] - you will recall there was some mention of this in our budget session this past March).

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2. The DDO feels that these reports are strictly internal evaluation documents which should not be given to Snodgrass for his retention and use as he sees fit. Yesterday Snodgrass told me that if he didn't get the information he needed by noon today he didn't want it until after the mark up. During the mark up he would inform the Subcommittee that he didn't receive the information he needed and would recommend that the Subcommittee make certain cuts in the DDO budget. Attached is a copy of the answer DDO and Comptroller have worked up and which was sent to Snodgrass this morning. This obviously is not going to satisfy him but I think the DDO's position is sound, for if these field reports are to be submitted to the Congress our field personnel will be writing them with this in mind and they will lose the usefulness they now have.

3. I suggest that you call Chairman Mahon at your earliest possible convenience to tell him that Snodgrass has requested this kind of information and, that while you are perfectly willing to discuss these

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Mr. Mahon. Would you please provide the Committee staff with some samples of these performance reports, sanitized as you think appropriate?

Mr. Bush. I would be willing to bring some down and discuss them with the Committee off the record, Mr. Chairman. But I am reluctant to do that, and I am even more reluctant to provide the documents themselves or to have their contents described to the Committee by anyone who is not intimately familiar with espionage, counterintelligence and covert action operations and with the entire management system used by the Operations Directorate.

There are a number of reasons for my position. One serious concern revolves around the effects on our internal processes of the sort of inquiry you propose. One of the primary reasons that our internal management system is effective is that participation is strictly limited to those immediately concerned. Given that we are all human beings, there is no escaping the fact that knowledge that the reports in question are being read, or may at some future time be read, by outsiders will lead to their being written with a view to their possible impact on an extended readership. There will be a tendency for the managers in the field to slant their discussions of problems and to exaggerate accomplishments. Inevitably, the net effect will be to reduce the usefulness of the system.

Another difficulty involves security. To be useful for judging performance, the reports must be very detailed. Thus they discuss recruitments in terms of numbers, the specific access of agents to information, recruitment techniques, and so forth. By the time all this sensitive material on sources and methods is removed, any samples are going to consist primarily of disconnected bits and pieces or of unenlightening generalizations.

And I have a third problem with this request. The reports themselves are but one part of a very complex and thorough process we use for internal management. It takes a detailed familiarity with the process to appreciate its effectiveness. Thus, I feel strongly that someone from the Agency who has that intimate knowledge should be present if and when you want to